

BOOK REVIEWS



*New England Music: The Public Sphere, 1600–1900.
The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife
Annual Proceedings 1996*

*Edited by Peter Benes (Boston, Mass.: Boston University, 1998,
pp. 208, paper, \$16.00).*

This excellent collection of fourteen essays with six appended abstracts from other presentations gives us an overview of music in New England in the long period before performance became a spectator sport. In the late nineteenth century, with the expansion of the cities in our region and the founding of more formal music operations such as symphony orchestras, the diversity and indigenous vitality of music-making began to decline. While many town bands still exist, they are marginalized on the one hand by the popularity of media presentations of classical music and on the other by the takeover of music-making by local commercial bands whose style renders acoustical instruments obsolete.

A rich and diverse music permeated early American popular culture, however, from its military and fraternal assemblies to its theatrical and social entertainments and, of course, to divine services. Lyceums, libraries, and churches, aspiring to European musical values, provided the patronage and purpose for public music. For over 200 years, Congregational parishes sang unaccompanied psalmody. Wealthy Episcopal parishes hired expensive immigrant organists, and European hymn collections such as those by Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady expanded the already rich repertory of New England churches.

The reader of these essays cannot but be surprised by how much

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activity there was in spite of Puritan strictures. The eighteenth-century New England ballroom taught country dances from England as well as the latest formal dances from the court of Louis XIV. Harlequin and Scaramouche arrived from Italy to present their pantomimes in Boston. Cotton Mather's "odd noise," as he characterized the singing of local congregations, was gradually replaced by singing by "Rule" as propounded by the singing masters. An essay on psalmody in *The Last of the Mohicans* may surprise those familiar with that great novel. Not only Boston but Portsmouth had a Handel Society with thirty-six men and women singing the classics. From the introduction we learn that 40 percent of music teachers (including the most famous, William Billings of Boston), players, and dancing masters were Masons. An essay on Freemasonry and music in Boston from 1730 to 1820 describes the use of music in their rituals and the publication of *The Masonic Minstrel* in 1816. An account of Joe Scott's ballad "Benjamin Deane" follows the creative history of broadside balladry.

Christmas music, suppressed by the Puritans because the actual date of Christ's birth was unknown, became popular with the publication of Tate and Brady (e.g., "While shepards watch'd") and the new tunes by Billings. Speculation on the participation of evangelicals in the tradition continues in an essay on revivalist singing of such popular evangelical hymns as "All Hail the Power." The *Young Convert's Pocket Companion* is a particularly interesting collection of spiritual folk songs because of the inclusion of both regional and frontier traditions.

No collection of New England music of this period would be complete without the inclusion of Lowell Mason, considered here in the context of Lyman Beecher's theology. In his *Address on Church Music* delivered at Beecher's church, Mason called for simplicity in devotional music, predominance of text, and "religious character" above musical ability in choir members.

Two essays consider the place of the town band in New England, a musical ensemble new to the United States after its establishment in England at the accession of George I in 1714. The touring bands of Patrick Gilmore and John Philip Sousa and the availability of inexpensive band instruments spurred the popularity of the band movement. Some wonderful photographs provide an iconography of the development of band brasses and views of New England's old village greens with their resident entertainers. The final essay is a fascinating description of the provenance of a folk violin from Boon Island in Maine, a red spruce instrument with a human head carved to look like a grave-

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stone etching in place of the usual scroll. This fiddle, crafted by Captain Eliphalet Grover, rests now in the collection of the Old York Historical Society.

The comprehensive bibliography is cleverly arranged by subject, an excellent idea for a collection as diverse as these essays. Students of early American popular culture and of any aspect of the performing arts in our region will want to own this volume.

JANE P. AMBROSE

Jane P. Ambrose is professor of music at the University of Vermont. She is also Director of the George Bishop Lane Artist Series and a professional flutist, specializing in historical performance practice.

The New England Village

*By Joseph S. Wood, with a contribution by Michael P. Steinitz
(Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997,
pp. 239, \$39.95).*

This is a book of considerable interest to students of the Vermont landscape. Its intellectual roots could be said to have been planted in Vermont, in the author's study, with Jamaica historian Mark Worthen, geographers Rowland Illick and Vincent Malmstrom at Middlebury College, and geographer Ted Miles of the University of Vermont. *The New England Village* deals with issues central to interpreting one of the most characteristic features of the Vermont landscape, the village, as it evolved in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and as it survives in countless instances, relatively uneffaced by later development.

Wood's book is a compilation of studies growing out of his dissertation in geography that were originally published as individual scholarly articles. These have been revised and gathered, along with a complementary contribution by Michael Steinitz on the architectural landscape, into this single volume. The essays examine the New England village, typified as a compact, nucleated agricultural settlement with meetinghouse and substantial houses around a green. Romanticized by nineteenth-century writers, historians, and illustrators as the embodiment of early colonial responses to issues of mutual defense and puritan communal values, the New England village has achieved importance as an American cultural artifact. Valued in the collective American mind

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as the archetype for small American towns that provide an appealing environment conducive to community and family values, it has served as an important model for suburbia and for contemporary neo-traditional planning.

The author submits this artifact to a multifaceted analysis. Using social history, land-use patterns, maps and views, tax records, longitudinal studies of community growth, and literary accounts, the essays track the formation of the New England village. Wood effectively challenges oversimplified and conventional interpretations of village form and provides tools and insights for seeing it instead as a complexly evolved product of changing social, economic, physical, and cultural conditions. He establishes an understanding of the actual colonial New England village as a social rather than a physical construct, characterized by coherently organized but dispersed farmsteads and modestly scaled buildings (most of which have disappeared) bound into a communal web that focused on an oft-isolated meetinghouse. He demonstrates that nucleated villages with grand houses developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as commercial center villages, often in propinquity to the centrally located meetinghouse and church lot, in response to changing patterns in economics and transportation. And he discusses the idealization of these latter villages as embodiments of earlier, puritan communal values at the time in the nineteenth century that they were being bypassed in scale, vitality, and diversity by urban centers such as Boston.

The evolution of this book from articles based on a dissertation does not always make for the most satisfying reading. There is more the flavor here of a scholarly exercise than of a synthesis for a general audience. Wood acknowledges this, citing the text's inherent repetitiveness. At times theoretical terminology and methodological discussion border on the ponderous. Yet the methodologies and the references to important scholarship are valuable, the points are clearly argued, and the insights are important for reading the complex artifact that is our landscape. The discussion is well documented, primarily on the basis of communities in Massachusetts and Connecticut, though an examination of the formation and evolution of Vermont's Hampshire Grant towns could have provided a wealth of additional corroborative material. It appears that, in spite of his Vermont background, Wood has left that fun for Vermont historians. Nevertheless, time and again one feels that although he is not using Vermont examples per se, Wood is writing the Vermont experience. His volume provides the tools and perspective for understanding our villages. By plugging the facts of our local history into its framework, we are in a position to

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read and understand more fully the evidence preserved in our historic environment.

GLENN M. ANDRES

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Ethan Allen and His Kin: Correspondence, 1772–1819, A Selected Edition in Two Volumes

Edited by John J. Duffy, with Ralph H. Orth, J. Kevin Graffagnino, and Michael A. Bellesiles. 2 vols. (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998, pp. 900, \$100.00).

Ethan Allen and His Kin: Correspondence 1772–1819 is the culmination of a lengthy, systematic effort by a team of scholars, researchers, and archivists to publish under one cover all the known letters of the Allen brothers and their immediate relations. The result is an invaluable resource for students of the Allens and the era in which Vermont and the United States came into being.

The two volumes contain 733 letters written by and to Allen family members plus five documents by Ira Allen in appendices. The letters have been painstakingly transcribed and minimally edited. Each is coded to indicate in which of thirty-one repositories it resides and in what form, *i.e.*, manuscript, burned manuscript, author's copy, etc. The editors present the letters chronologically, grouped by periods they characterize with general themes. An introduction to the collection deftly summarizes the Allens' history as speculators, entrepreneurs, and revolutionary state-makers. A short essay further introduces each section with historical information to provide context for the letters therein. These introductory pieces draw on the most recent scholarship on the Allens and Vermont. Endnotes elucidate each letter further with information about the individuals and events mentioned.

Despite the context the essays and endnotes provide, this collection is essentially the raw material of history. It is a mine rich with ore the reader must extract and refine. All such labor is duly rewarded. The full texts bring us closer to the correspondents than the familiar quotations biographers have extracted to color their interpretations. Business and politics predominate, but there is a wide variety of other subjects on

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which the letters shed helpful light. There are many intriguing flashes of the letter writers' personalities and private worlds.

Few readers will want to proceed page by page through both volumes, but there are many ways to use and enjoy this collection. Most obviously, researchers will find their work greatly facilitated by having all this correspondence in one place. A good approach for aficionados of the Allens and early Vermont is to choose a topic and hunt for pertinent passages over time. One can follow Ethan and Ira's evolving roles as leaders of the resistance to New York, explore the frontier economy as Ira and Levi struggle to find markets for Vermont products in Canada, or track the course of negotiations with the British over Vermont's possible reunion with the Empire, to give just a few examples. Some passages reveal family dynamics: Samuel Hitchcock, husband of Ethan's oldest daughter, referring sarcastically to his stepmother-in-law, the widowed Fanny, as "chaste, discreet & virtuous" and hoping she will not be home when he visits; or the huffing exchanges between Ira Allen and Jabez Penniman, whom Fanny had married, over which of them had suffered more to clothe and educate Ethan's sons. The few letters by women are particularly interesting, often expressing the difficulty of marriage to such ambitious, peripatetic men and showing a degree of involvement in their businesses readers might not expect from eighteenth-century women.

The book's introduction includes a genealogy of the Allen brothers. Extending it through the next generation would have helped the reader keep characters straight in later correspondence when sons, nephews, nieces, and cousins are frequent authors, recipients, or subjects. Inevitably with such wide-ranging subject matter, there are occasional errors in the endnotes. The Averill referred to in a 1785 letter to Ira Allen by Thomas Butterfield was probably Josiah Averill, the housewright who built several structures in early Burlington, not Samuel Averill, the Burlington proprietor. The endnote on page 743 refers to Lucinda Allen Hitchcock, daughter of Heman Allen; Lucy Allen Hitchcock was Ethan Allen's oldest daughter and the addressee of the letter. Heman's daughter Lucinda married Moses Catlin, as stated in an earlier endnote.

The emphasis on Ethan Allen in the title of the collection, along with his autograph attractively embossed on the covers, suggests that he is the key figure in these letters. In fact, only 91 of the 733 letters were written by Ethan, and 11 written to him. Because he had died before the end of the period represented by the first volume, the second volume has no Ethan Allen correspondence. Ira and Levi Allen's letters are more numerous, and Ira is centrally involved in most of the matters

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treated in the letters. Ethan, the family's flamboyant front man, continues to overshadow his younger brothers.

The collection's minor flaws hardly diminish its value. Through their painstaking work, John Duffy and his collaborators have given professional and avocational scholars the most comprehensive approach to the extended Allen family imaginable. With luck, this collection and other recent works by Duffy's fellow editors Michael Bellesiles and Kevin Graffagnino will draw more attention to the Allens and Vermont and win recognition of their true importance in the formation of the United States.

SCOTT STEVENS

Scott Stevens directed the Ethan Allen Homestead historic site in Burlington, Vermont, from 1989 to 1997. He is currently executive director of the Old York Historical Society, York, Maine.

Improve, Perfect, & Perpetuate: Dr. Nathan Smith and Early American Medical Education

By Oliver S. Hayward, M.D. and Constance E. Putnam (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1998, pp. 362, \$35.00).

This book had to be written. It is the first definitive biography of Dr. Nathan Smith, 1762–1829. The most prominent New England physician of his time, Smith was a pioneer medical educator, founding medical schools at Dartmouth and Bowdoin, assisting at the birth of those at Yale and the University of Vermont, and teaching at one time or another in each. Oliver Wendell Holmes once wrote that Smith occupied not a chair but a settee of professorships.

Dr. Oliver S. Hayward, a family practitioner in Cornish, New Hampshire, spent many years as a labor of love, searching out sources relating to Dr. Smith's life and made several rough drafts of a biography. Resigned to the idea he would never complete the work, Hayward finally asked his family friend, writer Constance Putnam, daughter of his colleague Dr. William F. Putnam, to take over. She agreed but, because of other literary commitments, had to put off taking the responsibility in earnest for several years. Dr. Hayward died in 1990, leaving files and closets full of material which Putnam supplemented with her own extensive research. The book fills the need for a biography of this

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already famous physician and surgeon. Except for an introductory chapter by Philip Cash, Emeritus Professor of History, Emmanuel College, which gives a useful background of medical practice in New England, the writing is all Putnam's, but she has modestly listed the name of Dr. Hayward above hers as the primary author.

Legend has it that Smith, an uneducated farm youth, attended the amputation of a leg which took place in an open field in Chester, Vermont, in the presence of any who wished to observe. In keeping with the surgical practice of the time, it is unlikely that the surgeon, Dr. Josiah Goodhue of Putney, would have brought along anyone to help. He would have had to rely on volunteers to restrain the patient, who, in the absence of anesthesia, would have been expected to struggle during the procedure, which necessarily would last but a few minutes. Nathan was said to have stepped forward and "without flinching" (p. 8) held the leg and even helped to control the bleeding. At the conclusion of the procedure he asked to be taken on as a pupil.

In rural New England the customary training of a young physician was apprenticeship to an established practitioner. The quality of the product varied widely and Goodhue, believing the profession would become more respectable only if physicians had more general education, sent Smith to study with a local minister. Then after three years with Goodhue he set up practice in Cornish, New Hampshire. He soon developed a reputation for skill and compassion and in a few years was himself attracting pupils. He became increasingly convinced that the proper training of a physician required more than 'this is how I do it' by an individual practitioner, not all of whom had Dr. Goodhue's high standards.

Enforceable regulation of the practice of medicine was still in the future, and physicians looked for criteria that would allow the public to identify orthodox physicians and would differentiate them from the many self-styled healers who presented themselves. They formed medical societies, membership not open to the rascals, and welcomed the introduction of degree-granting institutions. Late in the eighteenth century, Harvard was the only medical school in New England and out of reach of most north-country residents.

In 1789 Smith, although he could ill afford it, took off for a course of lectures at Harvard and was awarded the M.B. degree (later changed to the M.D.). Back in Cornish he approached the trustees of Dartmouth College for permission to start a school of medicine with himself as professor. There was much hesitation because of the fear of added expense. In 1796, at considerable personal sacrifice, he left his growing family and practice and sailed for Scotland, hoping that a degree from

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Edinburgh would add to his professional qualifications and that the authorities in Hanover would find his proposal more attractive. In 1797 Dartmouth did add a course of medical lectures and Smith was the professor. Professorship in medicine was far from a full time job. Smith's reputation as physician and surgeon continued to grow. As was the custom, he visited and treated patients in their homes, and, when surgery was required performed it there, as well. He devised and published innovations in methods of treatment. All this involved much travel by horse and was, at times, exhausting.

In 1813 Smith resigned from Dartmouth and was appointed to the first medical faculty at Yale as professor of Theory and Practice of Physic, Surgery, and Obstetrics. Still vigorous in 1821, he helped to found a medical school at Bowdoin in Maine.

The availability of instruction filled a need but, in the absence of general hospitals, there was little opportunity for hands-on exposure to real patients. At the medical school lectures, diseases the students would encounter would be described along with medicines and other methods of treatment, a theoretical framework of current attempts at explaining the phenomena of disease. Dr. Smith, on the other hand, offered an introduction to the real world. Using colloquial language he provided vivid descriptions of actual cases from his busy practice insisting that accurate observations are more important in the learning process than theoretical considerations and more likely to improve care. The book's title "*Improve, Perfect, & Perpetuate*" is taken from Smith's admonition to the graduating class of students in 1806 (p. 79).

Nathan's son Ryno practiced in Burlington, Vermont, for a time. He and his more famous father helped to jumpstart the college in its struggle to establish a viable medical department and each gave courses of lectures. It is also of interest to Vermonters that Joseph Gallup, who was one of the early presidents of the Vermont State Medical Society, was one of the first to earn the M.D. at Dartmouth, and later founded the Clinical School of Medicine in Woodstock, Vermont.

Constance Putnam specializes in medical history and ethics. Although not a physician herself, she grew up in a medical household and is well versed in rural medical practice. She has either avoided or explained technical terms and has produced a lively and well written book, understandable to the general reader and of particular interest to physicians and medical students.

LESTER WALLMAN

Lester Wallman is emeritus professor of neurological surgery at the University of Vermont.

Life with Father: Parenthood and Masculinity in the Nineteenth-Century American North

By Stephen M. Frank (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp. 256, cloth, \$34.95).

In *Life with Father*, Stephen M. Frank recounts the adaptations of middle-class fathers as they accommodated the separation of home and work in the nineteenth century. Taking his cue from scholarship on the evolution of the modern family, the nature of masculinity, and the feminization of the middle-class home, Frank asks, “Where . . . amidst the surge of sentiment, did the father reside in this modern, mother-dominated middle-class household?” (p. 174). If mothers took over the task of rearing children, what was left for fathers to do? Joining others who challenge the dominance of separate spheres ideology, Frank finds plenty of evidence that fathers were not forgotten. The middle-class household was no separate arena where mothers ruled; rather, it sheltered the transformation of the colonial patriarch into the Victorian “family man,” who valued “marriage, family making, and child rearing no less than his self-sacrificing wife” (p. 174).

As Frank readily admits, this expansive thesis is limited to a narrow, if socially important and dominant, class of men. Scouring letters, diaries, and reminiscences of white, Protestant, middle-class men from New England and the Midwest, Frank attempts to evaluate the behavior of these fathers in light of the contemporary prescriptive literature they may have read. Authors of this literature sought to counter the dominance of mothers and fortify patriarchal authority by promoting a morally based “Christian fatherhood” in the antebellum years and later in the century, what Frank calls, “paternal manhood.” This biologically defined ideal postulated that paternity was necessary for men to reach full manhood. Against this backdrop, the personal documents of 192 men, born largely between 1780 and 1880, provide keen insights into middle-class male attitudes about family responsibilities and evidence of fathers’ efforts to partake in domestic life. While the largest number are from Michigan and Massachusetts, evidence from eleven Vermont residents sprinkled throughout the text render the story of interest to *Vermont History* readers. Organized topically around fathers’ life-course perspectives, the evidence displays fathers’ attitudes about “becoming a parent,” frolicking with young children, and providing a patrimony for adolescent sons and daughters. These fathers actively, if periodically,

engaged in family life but rarely diminished mothers' leadership in child rearing as much as prescriptive writers thought necessary.

In his most significant contribution, Frank challenges the notion that a "father's care" disappeared because his time with children was more restricted than during earlier eras. According to theories of the modern, middle-class family, commercial and industrial development beginning in the late eighteenth century removed fathers from the household to new work spaces, thereby diminishing their former child-rearing role. As fathers supposedly retreated physically and intellectually from their children, mothers filled the void with increased care, moral instruction, and attention. Yet, as Frank argues, commerce had dragged fathers away to distant markets and land opportunities long before the advent of mass industrialization, and working-class men were equally, if not more, likely to leave home in search of wages than their middle-class counterparts. His evidence displays urban, middle-class fathers living near their offices and stores and spending considerable time with their children. But the way they structured their family life did change. Increasingly, middle-class fathers found themselves enjoying their children during evening fireside reading, play, and Sunday recreation rather than supervising their daily work routines. This "family time" coupled with occasional absences rendered a father's presence special and often associated with play, even while he bolstered his wife's authority by insisting upon his children's obedience to her regime.

While evidence in *Life with Father* supports this model for urban fathers, relations between rural fathers and children continued to reflect underlying economic obligations, suggesting that changes in fathers' provisions for children had more to do with shifting fatherhood styles than the structure of family time. Concerned with family survival, farm fathers persistently claimed their adolescent sons' labors, which colored father-son relations. Sons recall having to buy "their time" to absolve themselves of this obligation and strike out on their own. Little outward affection and playfulness could emerge between fathers and sons tied to each other under an economic contract that became increasingly strained over the course of the century as the value of manual labor decreased. Urban fathers, on the other hand, felt obligated to provide for their sons' educations, a necessity to achieve middle-class status. Their sons shouldered the psychological rather than physical burden of exhibiting prudent bourgeois habits and respect for parents. Unfortunately, Frank pays scant attention to daughters; they appear as models for future wifehood or as a father's "trophy" of success. In the end, fathers remained central to family life because they controlled wealth transmission, whether held in land or the cost of an education.

Frank's evidence supports this conclusion though he is far more interested in establishing fathers as companions to their children.

Life with Father does not significantly change our image of the middle-class home. Even under Frank's microscope, fathers' relationships with their children were mediated through mothers' centrality in the home. Frank does add complexity to our understanding of a father's place in that sentimental space. Nonetheless, in light of current scholarship delineating the variety of racially and ethnically defined family paradigms, the study appears one-dimensional at best. To what extent, for example, did white, middle-class men define responsible fatherhood in opposition to that of African-American or immigrant men? Moreover, Frank skirts recent historiography about changing male attitudes toward sexuality, which undoubtedly influenced men's perceptions of fatherhood as well. Nor does he analyze fathers' wills, a key resource for understanding changing family relations and values. Despite these caveats, *Life with Father* largely fulfills the author's goals of uncovering how market activity influenced the way fathers behaved at home.

MARILYN S. BLACKWELL

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Delia Webster and the Underground Railroad

By Randolph Paul Runyon (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996, pp. 272. \$29.95).

Saint or Demon? The Legendary Delia Webster Opposing Slavery

By Frances K. Eisan (New York: Pace University Press, 1998, pp. 213, \$46.00).

Taken together, these two books reflect a revival of interest in the enigmatic career of Delia Ann Webster, an abolitionist from Ferrisburgh, Vermont, who was active in the Underground Railroad in northern Kentucky in the 1840s and 1850s. Both writers begin with the story of Webster's journey from Lexington, Kentucky, to Ripley, Ohio, on the night of September 28, 1844, helping abolitionist minister Calvin Fairbank to rescue Lewis Hayden, his wife, and their son from slavery. Hayden and his family successfully escaped, eventually to become im-

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portant leaders of the abolitionist black community of Boston, but Webster and Fairbank were both convicted of aiding Hayden's escape, and both served sentences in the Kentucky State Penitentiary. While in the penitentiary, Webster apparently fascinated—possibly even seduced—her jailer, Newton Craig, a prominent Kentucky politician. After her pardon in early 1845, Webster returned to Vermont, both defending and apologizing for her actions in a carefully worded pamphlet, *Kentucky Jurisprudence*, which caused significant controversy in New England antislavery circles because of its apparent support for the “chivalry” of Kentuckians. The final phase of Webster’s antislavery career took place in the 1850s when she established a “free labor farm” in Trimble County, Kentucky. Because of intense, violent opposition from her neighbors, Webster left Kentucky in 1866. Eventually Webster, who never married, joined her sister’s family, moving to a series of small towns in Iowa and Wisconsin. Webster died in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1904, essentially forgotten by the American public.

Delia Webster’s notoriety was not simply based on her being one of only a handful of white women jailed for their opposition to slavery. Webster clearly had a personal presence that enabled her to capture public attention and sympathy and to fascinate individual men. Even after her conviction for aiding Lewis Hayden’s escape, Webster had many prominent visitors as the only female prisoner in the Kentucky State Penitentiary. Apparently, she was not averse to using her sexual appeal to further her own ends. During her stay in the penitentiary, warden Newton Craig became so enamored of her that he hired her as a governess upon her release. Craig also began to shape his very complex business arrangements in order to justify travelling to meet Webster in Vermont and New York. In 1848 and 1849, Craig wrote Webster a series of letters that show his passionate attachment to her: “may kind Heaven bless your dear heart, and send you speedily to his arms, is the desire of your fond father” (Runyon 135). In another letter, Craig dropped the fatherly persona: “I LOVE you, yes, I LOVE you most dearly, and can never prosper in your absence” (Runyon 139).

Webster clearly capitalized on Craig’s attachment to her, accepting a furnished house in Madison and borrowing a large amount of money from him while caring for Craig’s children, alternately living in Indiana and with her parents in Vermont. But she found Craig’s support inconvenient when she established her experimental farm, an attempt to show Kentuckians that free labor was more profitable than slavery—Craig’s wealth was based primarily on profits from prison labor. Webster established her independence from Craig at the expense of her own reputation: she gave Craig’s love letters to his political rivals, who published

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them in the Louisville newspapers. The ensuing scandal prevented Craig's reelection as warden of the state penitentiary in 1854, nearly ruined him financially, and provoked him into a series of attacks on Webster's farm, in which armed mobs burned barns, ruined machinery, and stole the harvest. In addition, Craig orchestrated a series of legal challenges seeking to imprison Webster for her role in aiding the escape of Lewis Hayden's wife and child. The result, eventually, was the failure of Webster's farm and her removal to Iowa.

It is well known that the abolitionist movement was riven with controversy and factionalism. The most famous of these controversies were over the public participation of women in abolitionist organizations and whether the Constitution necessarily supported slavery. In her own time, however, Delia Webster was a controversial figure not because of her positions on these contentious issues, but because of questions about her honesty and sexual purity. Reactions to Webster by both abolitionists and slave holders show the power that doctrines of sexual purity and moral uprightness held for genteel nineteenth-century reformers. Studying Webster's manipulations of these codes helps us to see how they could be used as political weapons.

Both books highlight the ambiguity of Webster's actions according to nineteenth-century social standards. Neither, however, speculates enough on the meaning of Newton Craig's relationship to Webster. Runyon's research is better than Eisan's for the most part, especially because he covers in some detail the stories of Calvin Fairbank and Lewis Hayden as they relate to Webster. While Eisan's book is seriously marred by poor writing, she has more fully explored the Trimble County sources, especially the role of the socially-prominent Preston family in the Underground Railroad and in protecting Webster from prosecution. Both books should provide substantial new evidence of the role of Vermont in fostering an abolitionist spirit, not only locally, but also throughout the United States.

EDWARD EDEN

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*Letters to Vermont from Her Civil War Soldier
Correspondents to the Home Press, Vol. 2*

Compiled and edited by Donald H. Wickman (Bennington, Vt.: Images from the Past, 1998, pp. 251, \$30.00; paper, \$19.95).

In his second volume of *Letters to Vermont*, Donald Wickman introduces us to six more soldiers serving in Vermont regiments during the Civil War through their letters to the Rutland *Herald*. This half dozen, along with the seven soldier-correspondents in Mr. Wickman's first volume of the same title, provide the intimate look at wartime experiences that only a participant can give.

Mr. Wickman devotes a chapter to each correspondent and begins each chapter with a biographical sketch of his prewar life. Photographs of four of the six correspondents accompanied by a generous sampling of period photographs and lithographs allow the reader to identify with the writers of the letters and the individuals and events they describe. Each chapter concludes with an epilogue describing the postwar activities and ultimate death of that correspondent.

The first correspondent, Lieutenant John Dickinson, was a reporter for the *Herald* before going off to war. Lieutenant Dickinson takes us to the front with the 7th Vermont Infantry, on board the troop ship *Premier* down the Atlantic coast, around the tip of Florida, and ultimately to New Orleans and its fall to Federal forces in April of 1862. Lieutenant Dickinson provides the best prose of the half-dozen correspondents, and his description of the voyage, the sights, and even the inevitable seasickness, practically makes us passengers on board the ship. But the Lieutenant's best descriptions are of the artillery barrage and naval battle that sealed the fate of the city. Fortunate enough to find himself aboard the flagship of General Benjamin Butler, the commander of the expedition, Lieutenant Dickinson had a ringside seat to the action. When the intensity of the battle defied simple description, he resorted to metaphor: "One hundred black cats settling a deadly feud in a Vermont thunder storm would present a similar field for description" (p. 22).

Next, the field artillery is represented by Private Dunham Burt, a harness maker from Castleton, who enlisted in the 1st Vermont Light Artillery and later in the 1st U.S. Artillery. Although present at the Battle of New Orleans under General Butler, he did not see action until later, under the command of General Nathaniel Banks at the fall of Port Hudson that finally opened the Mississippi to the Union in July, 1863. However,

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Private Burt's best writing is done during Banks's ill-fated Red River campaign in 1864, when he describes his battery's costly rear guard action enabling Banks's army to withdraw to safety after its defeat.

Two members of the 9th Vermont Infantry, both destined to be promoted to officers, trace the movements of the most traveled of all of Vermont's regiments. First Alfred Ballard, a schoolteacher from Tinmouth, then Joel Baker, a Rutland County attorney, take us along on the regiment's journeys. Ballard describes the regiment's recruitment, basic training in Brattleboro, and travel to Washington anticipating combat. But after it is ordered by the commander of the Federal garrison to surrender at Harper's Ferry to Stonewall Jackson during Lee's September 1862 Maryland campaign, the 9th is sent to Chicago on parole to await its exchange for a like number of captured Confederates. By the summer of 1863, the 9th was again in the field on the Virginia Peninsula east of Richmond, participating in a feint against the Confederate capital to keep the city's garrison troops from reinforcing Lee at Gettysburg. While on the Peninsula, Ballard contracted the malaria that ultimately resulted in his medical discharge after the 9th Vermont was moved again to North Carolina to protect the coastal foothold gained there earlier by Federal forces.

Joel Baker, who began his enlistment as a sergeant, completes the odyssey of the 9th back to Virginia, to take part in the assault on Richmond with the Army of the James. Promoted to lieutenant, Baker boasts that members of the 9th Vermont were the first Union troops to enter the Confederate capital when it was abandoned by Southern forces in April, 1865. In the epilogue, Mr. Wickman tells of postwar accounts describing Lieutenant Baker pulling down the flag still waving over the Confederate White House when the 9th entered Richmond.

Judson Lewis, a teacher from Poultney, tells of his tour of duty with the 11th Vermont, initially designated as a heavy artillery regiment, to man the cannons in the ring of forts protecting Washington. However, by 1864 the regiment was summoned by Grant to become infantry to replace the staggering losses in the Army of the Potomac in its campaign against Lee. Added to the Vermont Brigade in the VI Corps, the 11th had its baptism of fire at Spottsylvania and was fed into the meat grinder at Cold Harbor, where the recently promoted Lieutenant Lewis tells of regiments losing half their number in ten minutes. The 11th fared better when moved along with the rest of the VI Corps to parry Jubal Early's threat on Washington, and, along with the other forces under command of Philip Sheridan, ultimately denied access of the Shenandoah Valley to the Confederates.

Along with Sheridan in the Shenandoah was the 1st Vermont Cavalry, the state's only cavalry regiment. Trooper James Barrett, a mechanic from Hinsdale, New Hampshire, provided the *Herald* with gripping ac-

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counts of the Vermont cavalry, with George Armstrong Custer's division in its pivotal role at the battle of Cedar Creek, and the regiment leading the final cavalry charge on the morning of April 9, 1865, which was abruptly halted by news of Lee's surrender. Trooper Barrett also tells of his regiment's earlier participation in Judson Kilpatrick's controversial and unsuccessful raid on Richmond during February and March of 1864, Grant's overland campaign against Lee in May and June, and repeated raids on Confederate supply lines during the siege of Petersburg.

Mr. Wickman does an excellent job of editing this collection of letters by filling in the regiments' histories left blank by gaps in the correspondence and by footnoting the text of the letters to provide explanations and details of references by the correspondents. He also provides a brief outline of the command structure and defines military terms to allow this book to be understood by novice and buff alike. The welcome inclusion of maps allows the reader to trace the movements of the correspondents' regiments recounted in their letters.

This selection of letters provides an intimate look into the lives of those who actually lived through the rigors of warfare and the boredom of military life between the battles. There is a tendency among the writers to shield their friends and neighbors who read the *Herald* from the actual horror of combat and to glorify the accomplishments that cost the lives of friend and foe alike. But that is not the fault of Mr. Wickman; it is a literary conceit nineteenth-century society expected and received from those who wrote first hand accounts of what was considered the great adventure of preserving the Union.

CHARLES S. MARTIN

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New Lives in the Valley: Slate Quarries and Quarry Villages in North Wales, New York and Vermont, 1830–1920

By Gwilym R. Roberts (Somersworth, NH: New Hampshire Printers, 1998, pp. 470, \$23.95).

Like marble and granite, slate has been quarried in Vermont for over 155 years. Unlike marble and granite, however, slate has not ordinarily been used to beautify. Dull and functional and the least expensive to quarry and finish, slate has been used for dimensional products like roofing tiles, school slates, billiard table beds, and other slab products.

Perhaps it has been for this reason that, except for mention in town histories, slate quarrying has been given little or no attention. Gwilym R. Roberts's readable and informative book begins to make up for this oversight. Roberts focuses on the industry and the slate workers themselves, who came initially from northern Wales. He demonstrates how their transplanted culture has given the Vermont-New York border an identity that it still retains. Fair Haven, Vermont, for example, posts street signs like Caernarvon. Two now defunct brick Welsh churches, slate slab sidewalks, cemetery gravestones with Welsh inscriptions, and laid up slate house foundations also reflect a Welsh heritage.

The “valley” to which Roberts refers is that of the Poultney and Mettawee rivers, where slate treasure lies below the surface in shades of purple, grey, unfading green, sea green, and red. By the mid-nineteenth century these slate deposits, recognized by absentee Boston owners for their potential once the transportation system was in place, had begun to entice a steady stream of Welsh slate workers to the Vermont towns of West Castleton, Hydeville, and Fair Haven and, later, Poultney and Pawlet. In New York State they settled the region around Granville, close to Vermont’s western border.

Roberts describes how depressed economic conditions at the Blaenau Ffestiniog, Nantile Vale, Penrhyn, and Dinorwig quarries had led to this large migration from Wales. Taxes, in the form of a “church rate,” levied on the non-Anglican Welsh speaking nonconformist denominations, the power of the landlords, and the laws of primogeniture also contributed to the discontent. Thus, in the 1840s and 1850s, slate workers, following a familiar nineteenth-century migration pattern, began to leave the caverns and pits of Wales for the light of opportunity they perceived in the quarries of the New World. Although the slate industry of North

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Wales has been recorded in R. Merfyn Jones, *The North Wales Quarrymen 1874–1922*, Roberts's account may be the first linking the industry to its counterparts.

With a Welsh father (a slate splitter in the Maine quarries whose photograph appears in the dedication) and two Welsh grandfathers working in the slate trade, Roberts has had access to this Welsh immigration history first hand. A Fulbright grant gave him access to primary sources at the University College of North Wales and National Library of Wales. In Wales Roberts broadened his understanding of the Welsh language that flavors the book, the very core of the Welsh culture in the valley.

Settling into new jobs and living conditions, the Welsh established in each region, communities based on traditional religion, language, family life, and leisure. Readers with Welsh forebears will warm to Roberts's chapter on Welsh literary and musical traditions such as the Eisteddfod festival. In the valley settlements this week-long festival of poetry and music was reestablished and several annual gatherings drew crowds of native Welsh speakers from surrounding regions. The Eisteddfod remained an annual event up until the 1920s.

Roberts recounts the classic pattern of acculturation and assimilation in the valley. The Welsh slate communities followed this predictable pattern of cultural disintegration. However, up until the 1940s Welsh could still be heard on the streets, even though the second wave of slate workers from eastern Europe and French Canada, with their own languages, had settled in, filling the labor gap left by the aging Welsh quarrymen.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century were unstable times for all labor, and the slate industry was no exception. Architectural styles were changing; the mansard roof popular in the late nineteenth century, with its thousands of colored and fancy patterned shingles, was passé. Alternative products like marbleized slate mantels eventually lost appeal with the fickle public. Freight rates for heavy slate products were prohibitive; technology had now created a composition shingle that was lighter to ship and easier to install. The skilled slate worker like Roberts's father, who could split a slate to as fine a width as 3/16th of an inch, was no longer in demand.

The strains of seasonal employment, strikes, and layoffs caused by such fluctuations in taste and trade led many Welsh workers to seek employment in other slate producing areas, namely, Pennsylvania, Maine, and even Canada. But all regions were suffering the same economic conditions. Roberts writes of the weak and unsuccessful early attempts at unionization and notes that the earliest Welsh had no stomach for labor strife, a predisposition traceable to their experience in Wales.

Roberts ends his historical account at 1920. Yet he extends the last

chapter to point to evidence of interest in slate and Welsh cultural heritage: Green Mountain College's fine library of Welsh-related material and artifacts and a Welsh Heritage program; Granville, New York's new Slate Valley Museum; the donation of recordings of the Welsh Male Chorus of Poultney to the Vermont Historical Society; the Vermont Museum's exhibit on marbleized slate; the activation of specific quarries in order to replace the slate on historic buildings; and the incorporation of slate into architectural design. (Witness the post-1960 Catholic Cathedral in Burlington with its chaste slate interior furnishings that replaced a traditional nineteenth-century-style church with elaborate interior marble fittings.)

Roberts rounds off his work with an inclusive index that contains the late University of Vermont history professor Paul Evans's thesis on the Welsh settlement of central New York State. The bibliography would have been enhanced by Mary Cullen's *Slate Roofing in Canada* (Ottawa, Canada: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990), a useful *vade mecum* with architectural information that is equally valid for the United States. Also, the inclusion of maps from F. W. Beers, *Atlas of Rutland County, Vermont, 1869* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1969), would have helped the reader to locate the quarries in the various towns.

The history of slate in the Vermont-New York areas had been a *tabula rasa*. But now it is inscribed. With this strongly focused work Roberts has marked the slate. He has not, however, filled it in. There is much more information to be mined. Roberts's excellent contribution challenges other historians to that goal.

BARBARA KNAPP HAMBLETT

Barbara K. Hamblett's exhibit on marbleized slate produced by the Vermont Historical Society in 1987 won an award for the Society from the American Association for State and Local History. She was exhibit curator at the State of Michigan Historical Museum and most recently project curator at Shelburne Museum.

Coolidge: An American Enigma

By Robert Sobel (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1998, pp. 462, \$34.95).

Many *Vermont History* readers are already familiar with the parable of Ronald Reagan and the resurrection of Calvin Coolidge. Newly inaugurated President Reagan, along with the White House curator, strolled into the cabinet room where there were portraits of former presidents Jefferson, Lincoln, and Truman. Anticipating Reagan's disapproval, the curator suggested the Truman portrait could be removed. Reagan so ordered and directed it to be replaced with a portrait of Calvin Coolidge. Reagan's admiration for Coolidge—he seldom missed an opportunity to note that his predecessor reduced taxes four times—was shared by others who, under Reagan's aegis, sparked a reassessment. That reassessment, a veritable Coolidge renaissance contributed to by participants of all political stripes, engendered conferences, articles, presidential analyses, and biographies, which have corrected distortions, exposed rabid partisanship dressed as disinterested scholarship, and fleshed out the Silent Cal caricatures advanced as historical judgment.

Robert Sobel's *Coolidge: An American Enigma* is a product of that renaissance and the best of the new biographies. A professor of business history at Hofstra University, he is the author of more than thirty books. Writing from a conservative perspective, he offers fresh interpretations but no new revelations. "This book is not based on original research," he concedes (p. 15). Nor is it simply an accolade to a man Sobel obviously admires. The author writes approvingly of Coolidge's presidential agenda by dismissing claims that Coolidge's passive management style revealed his lethargy and positing that it was the fruit of a deliberate policy. There was, Coolidge asserted, too much legislation, and it was often more important to kill a bad bill than pass a good one. Cautioning against being in too much of a hurry to legislate, he urged lawmakers to "give administration a chance to catch up with legislation" (p. 84). Though sympathetic to this view, Sobel also suggests Coolidge's administrations were flawed.

Possibly most debilitating was the president's "timidity—his unwillingness to take political risks" (p. 320). His race policy provides graphic illustrations. Coolidge, like Harding before him, never shared Woodrow Wilson's racist perspectives. Coolidge recommended a commission consisting of blacks and whites "to formulate a better policy for

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mutual understanding and confidence,” recommended Congress enact anti-lynching laws, and recommended a half-million dollar appropriation to Howard University to fund the “education of five hundred colored doctors needed each year” (p. 250). More outspoken on the need for civil rights than any of his predecessors, Coolidge nevertheless let the matter rest with recommendations, despite the fact that the Ku Klux Klan was enjoying its heyday and was as viciously anti-Catholic and anti-semitic as it was anti-Black.

No contemporary Coolidge biographer can avoid dealing with the depiction of Coolidge as the godfather of Reaganomics and prescient proponent of what would become known as the Laffler curve. There is some substance to this. Coolidge did believe that a reduction in taxes, particularly income taxes, would stimulate the economy and enhance tax revenues. Yet Sobel insists that Coolidge was “not a ‘supply sider,’ as Arthur Laffler and his disciples were to be in the 1980s.” He anticipated tax cuts would “be paid for mainly by reductions in government spending” (p. 311), and he would never have countenanced the budget deficits that accumulated during the Reagan administrations.

Subtitled *An American Enigma*, Sobel’s book follows Coolidge’s career through its many twists and turns. He ran for political office nineteen times and won seventeen of the contests, holding public office almost continuously from 1898 to 1929. A Roosevelt Republican as a Massachusetts state legislator, he supported women’s suffrage, direct election of senators, improved public transportation, and a host of additional reforms that made him “uncomfortably progressive for some of his constituents in Northampton.” He “acted, talked, and voted like a Rooseveltian” (p. 68), but that was “not the Coolidge who became president in 1923 and is remembered today” (p. 69). At his vice-presidential inaugural he noted that “[t]he radicalism which had tinged our whole political and economic life from soon after 1900 to the World War period was passed” (p. 207). As president, he vetoed farm-price support bills and favored the privatization of Muscle Shoals, a future site of the New Deal’s Tennessee Valley Authority, because he believed “that the wedding of government and business would lead to socialism, communism, or fascism.” Yet he “supported government aid to commercial aviation, grants for road building and the protective tariff” (p. 333).

Apart from Sobel’s mislabeling the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) as the International Workers of the World (pp. 77, 265, and index) and his blaspheming Coolidge’s “Vermont is a state I love” speech as a Hoover campaign oration, he maintains a confident mastery of the facts, particularly those associated with crucial aspects of Coolidge’s career.

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Endnotes are provided in the form of chapter essays, and the publisher has provided a well-constructed bibliography and index.

Admirers of Coolidge's epigrammatic wit, and this reviewer confesses to such, will find new material to delight them. Calvin's disdain for Grace's University of Vermont education is less endearing. Nonetheless, those with any interest in Calvin Coolidge or the United States during the 1920s would do well to read Sobel's biography.

SAMUEL B. HAND

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Calvin Coolidge and the Coolidge Era: Essays on the History of the 1920s

Edited by John Earl Haynes (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 1998; distributed by the University Press of New England, pp. 329, \$50.00)

In 1995 the Library of Congress conducted a major symposium, "Calvin Coolidge and the Coolidge Era," which brought together over two dozen prominent scholars and historians. John Earl Haynes of the Library's Manuscript Division—the location of Coolidge's presidential papers—selected twelve of the conference's papers, and they were revised for publication in 1998, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Vermonter becoming president. While Haynes regretted that the entire proceedings, including the commentaries, could not be published, he has assembled and written an introduction to thought-provoking essays reflecting the most recent scholarship. Unfortunately, the collection lacks a clear focus, and this leads to my reviewing the individual essays and their contributions separately and without comparisons.

Paul Johnson's interesting keynote address, "Calvin Coolidge and the Last Arcadia," emphasized that the president's

minimalism was justified by events. Coolidge prosperity was huge, real, widespread though not ubiquitous. It was not permanent—what prosperity ever is? But it is foolish and unhistorical to judge it unsubstantial because of what we now know followed later. . . . it involved the acquisition, by tens of millions of ordinary families of the elements of economic security that had hitherto been denied them throughout the whole of history (p. 8).

And, Johnson concludes, with the "alarming national debt" and ques-

tions about the welfare state in the 1990s, “Coolidge is a highly relevant and indeed bang-up-to-date figure” (p. 13).

Bibliographical essays by John Braeman and Lynn Dumenil provide a wealth of material and a comprehensive guide to the era. Braeman, whose analysis of the 1920s started well over three decades ago, bluntly asserts that the picture emerging from recent scholarship “is in sharp contrast with the dominant image that has so long prevailed of a decade of stagnation even reaction. On the contrary, the 1920s was a time when Americans and their leaders grappled with the problems of managing an ever more complex and pluralist socio-economic order.” Some saw this transformation “into a modern urban industrial nation” as “a shock and threat”; others saw a “challenge and opportunity.” The ensuing tension, he concludes, “was responsible for the mixed, oft-times contradictory, responses that gave the era its distinctive character” (p. 39). Braeman’s sources appear in twenty-four pages of footnotes.

Dumenil’s highly praised *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* appeared the year of the symposium, and she critically surveys in her article the scholarship from the cultural and social perspective. The 1920s, she claims “is a particularly fertile period” for examining issues from the experiences of women and “ethnic and African American communities” to “working-class life and labor. . . . The decade embodies so much of what was making America modern.” In recent years, she writes, historians have “enlarged our view of the rich historical meanings embodied in Calvin Coolidge and his era” (p. 88).

Three essays, in addition to Johnson’s, specifically discussed Coolidge. Daniel J. Leab’s “Coolidge, Hays, and 1920s Movies,” adds a fascinating perspective on understanding the president. Coolidge held “movie previews” on “the fantail” of the *Mayflower*, at his vacation “camps,” and at the White House; moreover, “a visit to the MGM studios in Hollywood occasioned one of the few recorded instances of Coolidge publicly laughing out loud.” A trained bear went on a rampage and, as the Secret Service unsuccessfully tried to get Coolidge to leave, he “finally nearly doubled up with laughter.” The president’s “public persona,” Leab emphasizes, not only belied the private man but also overshadowed his understanding and intelligent use of the mass media” (pp. 103, 101).

The essays on Coolidge and on his relationship with Herbert Hoover offer insights into the political leadership and Republican Party politics. Robert H. Ferrell, a leading historian of the modern presidency, published in 1998 *The Presidency of Calvin Coolidge*, the first full-length study since Donald McCoy’s in 1967. Acknowledging in his essay that

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Coolidge did not possess an easy personality, Ferrell emphasizes the president's strong sense of service and his statement: "I am going to try to do what seems best for the country, and get what satisfaction I can out of that" (p. 146). George H. Nash, the author of a multi-volume biography of Hoover, argues in "The 'Great Enigma' and the 'Great Engineer'" that "the convoluted Coolidge-Hoover story" illustrated that "the Republican Party was no monolith"; indeed, in microcosm that relationship showed some of "the political fault lines" of the decade (p. 182).

Elizabeth I. Perry's "Now at Last We Can Begin" is a case study of "the impact of woman suffrage in New York." Accordingly, she proposes that the New York "experience was typical of many politically active women of the period" and provides insight, moreover, into "why woman suffrage failed to fulfill the promise to women of full political equality with men." She states that the woman's suffrage amendment seemed to offer a "clear, well-marked path toward women's empowerment. In reality, the path was strewn with perilous traps and agonizing choices." Women, she adds, "were unsure how to proceed" (pp. 273–74). Scholars will want to see if her findings help us understand the women's movement in Vermont.

Similarly, historians might wish to explore whether Ronald Edsforth's "Mass Culture and the Americanization of Working-Class Ethics" applies to Vermont of the 1920s and 1930s. He carefully defines "Americanization," not as "a necessarily negative reading of American nativism," but "as the process of mass-consumer society (which includes a mass popular culture)" (pp. 254, 256). From Polish-Americans in Buffalo to French-Canadians in New England, "The process of mobilizing ethnic working people to resist the coercive Americanism of nativists led increasingly well-organized ethnic Americans toward the politics of cultural pluralism and integration" (p. 263). Edsforth emphasizes that "working-class people of every ethnic background and race" were encouraged "to partake of the pleasures" advertised by the "Democracy of Goods." And, referring to "the unintended and sometimes ironic consequences of historical developments," Edsforth concludes that this growth of cultural pluralism during the Coolidge era "strengthened what shortly became [during the New Deal] the most significant working-class challenge to the political authority of business in American history" (p. 266).

The growing American economy receives attention in two articles. Michael I. Bernstein compares the "fantastic" production figures during the 1920s to Babe Ruth's batting average, the New York Yankees' won-lost record, and the national economy, and emphasizes that it would have been hard "to anticipate the exceptional economic difficulties of

the thirties" (pp. 191–92, 209). Recognizing "worms in the woodwork" (p. 193), Bernstein emphasizes the weaknesses in various theories for the Great Crash and Depression, and he stresses the importance of stagnation as a cause.

Economist Gene Smiley's "New Estimates of Income Shares during the 1920s" has a narrower focus. He points out that revised data and estimates on economic growth provide a view contrary to earlier judgments on income distribution, and he concludes: "The mass of the non-farm population *did* see increases in their real incomes, and the rise in inequality was less pronounced than previously thought" (p. 228).

The final essays on foreign policy pertain even less to Vermont history. The United States, "an imperial power with colonies and protectorates," was "not isolationist," according to Warren I. Cohen; "despite its regrettable failure to join the League, the United States was the world's leading power and the dominant actor on the global stage" (pp. 233, 242). Stephen A. Schuker shows that Europe remained a central concern and that "American economic and foreign policies decisively affected Europe." European nations, however, "lacked a balancing reciprocal importance" and, while Coolidge "remained cautious and prudent . . . [h]is more brilliant successors did not" (pp. 289, 304).

The brief excerpts and comments in this review hardly do justice to the book's contribution to a better understanding of Vermont's past. Most of the essays contain fresh material and insightful comments, and the book, when read with Ferrell's recent assessment of Coolidge's presidency, provides an excellent foundation for future studies. The Library of Congress's *Calvin Coolidge and the Coolidge Era* is a most welcome addition to the literature on Vermont History.

TRAVIS BEAL JACOBS

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The Snowflake Man

By Duncan Blanchard (Granville, Ohio: McDonald & Woodward Publishing Company, 1988, pp. 272, paper \$15.95)

Growing up involves setting aside our childhood fascinations and finding a way to “fit in” with the world around us. At least that is what we are told. How fortunate for the world that a Vermont teenager ignored this convention in pursuit of his passion. Over a century has now passed since Wilson A. Bentley revealed the secret wonders of snow crystals to the world, but we can all get a little closer to him in Duncan Blanchard’s biography, *The Snowflake Man*.

Born in the tiny village of Jericho, Vermont, Bentley was taught at home by his mother while the family ran a small farm. His parents scraped together enough money to purchase Bentley his first camera and a microscope. He created a completely new form of photograph on the way to taking the first photograph of the delicate form of a snow crystal before the age of twenty. His combination of skill and perseverance over the next five decades gave the world a unique glimpse at nature’s boundless beauty. However, his accomplishments went beyond photographing thousands of snow crystals, earning him the moniker, “Snowflake” Bentley. His numerous scientific papers and collaborations with well-known scientists around the turn of the century greatly increased understanding of the atmosphere.

Bentley’s single-minded fascination captured the imagination of Duncan Blanchard, an atmospheric scientist, who increasingly wondered what sort of man Bentley was, “who was so obsessed with the water wonders of the atmosphere—the raindrops, the dew, the clouds, and the frost, but mostly the snow—that he spent his lifetime photographing snowflakes and talking about the haunting beauty to all who would listen” (p. xii). Blanchard’s book, *The Snowflake Man*, brings us into the world of a shy Vermont farmer, recounting the events and people that shaped Bentley’s thoughts and gave the world a quiet, unassuming genius.

Capturing the life of Bentley on paper might have proven as illusive as photographing the delicate structures of snow crystals. Yet Blanchard was able to interview a number of people who had known Bentley personally and collect the few letters known to exist—a task made more difficult because most of Bentley’s personal correspondence was burned shortly after his death—together with papers published in magazines and journals. In spite of the challenges, Blanchard is able to reveal more than a man obsessed with snowflakes. Bentley was an ac-

complished musician, enough so that in order to support the cost of his pursuits, he “had to teach music to keep alive and to get funds” (p. 49). He also worked with his brother Charles to run a dairy farm, the family’s main source of income. And even as he immersed himself in the winter wonderland of falling flakes, Bentley’s writing often expressed a delightful dichotomy in his personality: the scientist who observed their delicate internal structures, and the artist and poet who frequently wrote of the “wonderful loveliness” and his “ambition to become, in some measure, its preserver” (p. 22).

The thoroughness of the book notwithstanding, there are portions of it that get bogged down in the numerous quotes and excerpts from letters and papers. An example is an anecdote from Bentley’s neighbor, Arthur Pratt, who recalled a hired hand saying to Bentley, “Willie, why the hell don’t you look at me when I talk to you?” (p. 113). Blanchard notes that no one else ever made mention of such a trait, so other than being mildly interesting, the story doesn’t seem to further our understanding of Bentley. Also, I would have expected more pictures of snow crystals in a book about a man so fascinated by snowflakes. There is a small photo section in the middle of the book, but I think Bentley might have seemed more of a presence with a more generous inclusion of some of his marvelous images.

If *The Snowflake Man* were merely a recounting of Wilson Bentley’s life, its fascination would be limited. But much like Bentley’s photographs, Blanchard has captured those heretofore unseen facets of Bentley. Bentley comes to life as a curious blend of a quiet, unassuming neighbor at work on the family farm and a genius possessing an unwavering passion to share the mysteries of nature he revealed with each stunning photograph.

MARK S. BREEN

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Thomas Chittenden's Town: A Story of Williston, Vermont

By Willard Sterne Randall and Nancy Nahra (Williston: Williston Historical Society, 1998, pp. 346, \$25.00).

Book-length histories of Vermont towns began to appear, it seems, as soon as there were Vermont towns about which to write. The two centuries since have witnessed a steady stream of books in the genre. Sometimes perceptive and informative, more often eccentric in style and content, Vermont town histories serve as windows into the concerns and ideals of their eras: ante-bellum town histories emphasize a town's moral and spiritual life; those of the Progressive era tend to dwell on genealogy and the business and professional careers of the town's "successful men." Whatever future observers might deduce from its style and content, *Thomas Chittenden's Town: A Story of Williston, Vermont* should serve as a model for a new generation of town histories. If the book is any indication, Vermont town histories are no less relevant than ever and more should be expected out of future ones, but there are perils as the genre grows increasingly ambitious and sophisticated.

Though published independently by the Williston Historical Society, *Thomas Chittenden's Town* has the attractively glossy and professional appearance of an imprint of a large publishing house. Its authors, Willard Sterne Randall and Nancy Nahra, who both teach at Champlain College in Burlington, do not settle for recounting the stories of Williston's people, institutions, and buildings. They prefer instead to take the long view of things. The chapters are arranged topically, allowing the authors to trace continuities and disruptions over time in such areas of Williston's past as its economy, religious life, schools, public celebrations, and prominent families. This approach produces a vision of the present that seems immediately and intimately tied to the past.

Another strength of the book distinguishing it from too many town histories both old and recent is its integration, when appropriate, of regional and national developments. Williston is portrayed not as a small town in splendid isolation, but instead as one closely tied to such outside events as the opening of the Erie Canal and fluctuations in federal currency policies. A measure of the authors' academic background is their comfort in making such welcome statements as "[Williston] faithfully . . . reflected the change and ferment in much of the United States during the Second Great Awakening" (162). This emphasis on context adds weight to Williston's story.

In addition to numerous illustrations and appendices, *Thomas Chittenden's Town* contains a lengthy bibliography. Unfortunately there are no citations, which, though likely of no consequence to the wide audience of readers the book deserves, limits its usefulness to scholars. In particular, the need for citations can be glaring when the authors take on topics of historical debate, such as the question of Thomas Chittenden's literacy. While arguing that it is self-evident that Chittenden was literate on the basis of his political, legal, and military obligations, Randall and Nahra criticize unspecified "later historians who fancied themselves more sophisticated" than Chittenden and have thus underestimated him. Though uncited, it seems clear this is a reference to Frank Smallwood, whose 1997 biography *Thomas Chittenden: Vermont's First Statesman* is the most notable book on Chittenden in decades. Readers of Smallwood's worthy volume may decide for themselves if, as Randall and Nahra comment, Smallwood "did not 'get' Thomas Chittenden," or if Smallwood's depiction of Chittenden is really that of "a rude hick." Until new documentation emerges to resolve the question, however, Smallwood's statement that "nagging questions remain concerning Chittenden's literacy" remains the more satisfactory assessment.

Because town histories have always aimed to keep the past a vital part of the present, Williston is a particularly appropriate subject for one now. In the last twenty years, Williston's population has risen by nearly 90 percent and its town budget by over 750 percent. The authors emphasize that change is nothing new and that the town has had many "faces." They are ultimately ambivalent, however, about how well Williston has recently maintained its traditional integrity. Despite the "unpredictable and uncontrollable change" they portray as Williston's story, their last word is that the town remains typified by "rootedness." Future observers may see wishful thinking in that conclusion, but more town histories like this might help maintain the rootedness that through time has been a large part of Vermont's essential character.

PAUL SEARLS

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Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods, Vol. II

By David J. Blow, edited by Lilian Baker Carlisle (Burlington, Vt.: Chittenden County Historical Society, 1998, pp. 234, paper, \$15.00).

Architecture is the most visible reflection of our history. It is the visual record of basic decisions people have made over time—where they chose to live, conduct business, publicly gather, recreate, and travel. It tells of the natural resources, human skills, and equipment available to construct buildings; of the importance of beauty and style in creating sheltered space to house human activity; and how people of a certain place and time wanted to be remembered by future generations.

When the visual record is coupled with the written record, we can experience a deep understanding of a particular place. A remarkable written record is David Blow's second volume of the *Historic Guide to Burlington Neighborhoods*, edited by Lilian Baker Carlisle. In it David Blow has continued his remarkable labor of love setting forth the history of Burlington places. This book covers the area defined by six important streets—College Street, Mansfield Avenue, Colchester Avenue, North and South Prospect streets, and Main Street. The book includes black and white photographs by Sarah L. Dopp and a wonderfully detailed discussion of the history and architecture of every primary building on these streets. There is a comprehensive table of contents and index.

Readers can learn about such interesting buildings as the Ames Tavern (411 Colchester Avenue), one of five surviving eighteenth-century dwellings in Burlington; the retirement home of General Oliver O. Howard (26 Summit Street), the founder of Howard University; the complex at 115–127 College Street of the Wells Richardson Company, manufacturers and distributors of “Improved Butter Color,” “Lactated Foods,” and “Baxter’s Mandrake Bitters”; and more modern buildings such as the 1952 Ohavi Zedek Synagogue (188 North Prospect St.) and the 1983 condominium complex behind 337 College Street.

There is much in this book for any lover of history to delight in. Devour it cover to cover, dip in and browse from time to time, or use it as a handy reference. History literally comes alive in this volume. As you walk these streets, either in person or while reading in your favorite chair, you can almost see the friendly ghosts of people and activities past. Watch local women in the early 1800s waiting for Moses Caitlin's wagons to rumble along Colchester Avenue from his mill at Onion River Lower Falls to deliver finished rolls of machine-carded wool “neatly wrapped in linen sheets pinned with thorns” (p. 98). Pay a call at

the homes of eminent Vermont historians Zadock Thompson (house moved in 1940 to 466 South Prospect Street) and Walter H. Crockett (179 Loomis Street). Take a peek at the brilliant silver-wedding-anniversary celebration in 1870 of Edward and Harriet Peck in their handsome Greek Revival style home at 326 College Street, and join the crowds on the sidewalk in 1915 ogling the new Cadillacs being driven away from the first Cadillac sales room in Vermont (at 63–67 Main Street).

With this lovingly detailed and well-written book, David Blow ably illustrates the historic and architectural richness of six additional Burlington neighborhoods. The abundance of fascinating information clearly shows why Burlington is entitled to the sobriquet of “Vermont’s Queen City.” In the foreword, the Chittenden County Historical Society expresses the hope that its publications, such as this one, will be mined as sources by future generations of historians.

There is no doubt of that. In the meantime the current generation of readers will enjoy this volume until copies become dog-eared with use.

ELSA GILBERTSON

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Things Were Different in Royce's Day. Royce S. Pitkin as Progressive Educator: A Perspective from Goddard College, 1950–1967

By Forest K. Davis (Adamant, Vt.: Adamant Press, 1996, pp. 305, \$35.00).

There is a wonderfully captivating vignette of Royce S. (“Tim”) Pitkin in this book’s introduction. Forest Davis recalls how Pitkin would “bounce down the corridor from his office in the silo, singing a nineteenth-century hymn in a melodious baritone, stop at a door where some of us were—pausing suddenly in his music, a scowl spreading over his face—and say with emphasis, ‘Oh, about (such-and-such), you understand that I am not happy about this. But you can try it. We will see later how it works.’ And he would be off again down the stairs, hymn resuming, leaving us speechless and wondering how we had escaped the judgment” (p. ix).

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This snap-shot of the energetic, unpretentious Pitkin suggests how he delighted his admirers, provoked more conventional educators, and often astonished the rest. Living in “the center of a vortex,” Pitkin was a catalyst who, when he joined a group or organization, made things happen. While he was centrally involved in a myriad of educational organizations, his major contributions to American higher education flowed directly from his sustained leadership of Goddard College, as an experimenting liberal arts institution from 1938 through 1969.

Goddard’s scale was modest indeed in its early years. Yet Pitkin successfully gathered around him a tiny band of dedicated educators who made the fledgling school with less than one hundred students a vibrant center for conferences, seminars, lectures, and workshops. While Pitkin was studying for his Ph.D. at Columbia University, he had never taken a course with the renowned John Dewey. But he had been powerfully influenced by other progressive teachers such as Edgar W. Knight, William Heard Kilpatrick, and, during a summer course at Yale, Boyd Bode. Thus, by the time Pitkin orchestrated the transformation of struggling Goddard Seminary in Barre into audacious Goddard College at Greatwood Farm in neighboring Plainfield, the overall contours of his own educational philosophy had been established. While never claiming to be a scholar, Pitkin was remarkably successful (with the aid of a bevy of Vermonters including Ralph Flanders, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, George Aiken, and Mary Jean Simpson) in staking out a place within the spectrum of progressive education in America.

Goddard quickly became one of the focal points of theory and practice in individualized, student-centered education, in relating the college to its community and regional setting, and in provoking discussion and debate over current educational issues. Goddard also experimented in forms of adult education that drew inspiration from far-ranging sources including Danish Folk Schools, English residential centers for adults, and Australian schools as well as from domestic institutions.

Forest Davis served Goddard in both teaching and administrative roles for seventeen critical years. His Adamant Press previously published an autobiographical oral history of Pitkin’s own writings in *To Know for Real: Royce S. Pitkin and Goddard College* (second edition, 1999), adroitly organized by Frank Adams and Ann Giles Benson. Davis inaugurates the present volume with a perceptive introduction followed by a sometime idiosyncratic but always stimulating 104-page extended essay on Pitkin and Goddard. He speculates insightfully upon multiple meanings of the Pitkin legacies, offering especially acute analyses concerning the period from 1950 through 1967 when he himself was a direct player in Goddard’s dramas.

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To be sure, some, both within and outside the Goddard orbit, found Pitkin to be something of a bulldog in argumentation and debate. While granting this, Davis nevertheless characterizes Pitkin as dynamic in his educational and social philosophy and gracious in his learning. Moreover, Davis celebrates Pitkin's animating force as he cultivated his "Roycean dialectic."

Sometimes, indeed, Pitkin overwhelmed colleagues and foes alike with his educational audacity. Conversely, Davis credits Pitkin with notable restraint after the creation of a second campus (Northwood) after 1965. The president no longer regularly chaired the faculty meetings of each campus, as Goddard tried to "grow big while staying small." Despite these changes, Davis suggests, Pitkin was able to cultivate the basic practices of the college: respect for each faculty and student learner, insistence upon establishing congenial settings for productive learning, and constant dialogue concerning educational experimentation.

Nearly two-thirds of this volume presents "Selected Writings of Royce S. Pitkin." The greater portion are "Reports of the President," composed quarterly during his thirty-one-year presidency. Pitkin made splendid use of this bully pulpit; the reports reflect his insight, his insistence upon distributing credit to other members of the Goddard family, his ferocious attention to financial details, and his dirt-and-potatoes realism concerning the plans and prospects of the often struggling college.

Pitkin appraises Goddard's prospects with refreshing, even astonishing, candor. In December 1965, Pitkin noted the creation of a "multi-campus experimental college," to test "the Goddard idea on a larger scale. . . . And so we committed ourselves to an enlargement of the temple! Since then there have been occasions when it has seemed more like the building of the tower of Babel" (182–183).

In brief, readers from a wide diversity of backgrounds will find this book stimulating, amusing, and often subtle in its commentary about the triumphs and pitfalls of Goddard's experiments in higher education. None would claim that Pitkin's educational idealism was perfectly realized. Indeed, President William Fels of Bennington College sympathetically declared that Goddard's financial stability in its pre-accreditation years was that of the bicycle rider who had to keep pedaling energetically to remain erect.

Finally, however, we cannot address American higher and adult education inclusively without reference to Goddard's experimental innovation since its founding in the latter days of the Great Depression. Forest Davis has provided worthy grist for the mills of sustained discussion and analysis, as our very different generation

comes to grips with Goddard's sometimes ambitious but always provocative legacies.

RICHARD O. HATHAWAY

Richard O. Hathaway, professor of liberal studies at Vermont College of Norwich University, served as a member of the teaching faculty at Goddard College from 1965 to 1981 and as Director of the Adult Degree Program from 1970 to 1972.

Utopian Colleges

By Constance Capel (New York; Peter Lang Publishing, 1999, pp. 160, paper, \$32.95).

Utopian Colleges, by Constance Capel, is a fascinating account of the history of five “innovative, experimental, and progressive” institutions of higher education that have developed in the tributaries of American education. While the mainstream, according to Capel, has been preparing students to fit into American society as it is or was, these five colleges have “all attempted to create and nurture a more humane and peace-loving type of education in a cruel and war-making world. These pockets of experimental education should be viewed as struggling examples of how a truly liberal education can be maintained in America today” (p. 2). Vermont’s Goddard College is joined in this group by sister institutions Sarah Lawrence, Antioch, World College West, and the Union Institute, which Goddard’s founding president Royce “Tim” Pitkin, a native Vermonter from Marshfield, helped to found in the 1960s.

Capel explains how all of these institutions have drawn at least part of their philosophical inspiration from the writings of another native Vermonter, John Dewey, who outlined a vision for a “democratic education that could prepare students for a democratic society” (p. 52), an education to be achieved not through rote learning and lectures, but through experience, reflection on experience, and the collaborative search for solutions to problems posed in classroom, school, and community. Biographer Robert Westwood, in his recent work *Dewey and American Democracy* (Cornell University Press, 1991) has traced Dewey’s vision of the ideal participatory democratic community to his experiences growing up in Burlington in the decades following the Civil War. The Vermont connection to these colleges, in both personal and philosophical terms, is clear. Capel explains Dewey’s vision as follows:

Dewey observed that education can foster economic equality while integrating youth into adult society only under one condition: a thorough extension of democracy to all parts of the social order. He believed that economic justice is built on a society of individuals capable of interpersonal relationships on the basis of equality and reciprocity. Dewey's ideal society and a truly utopian society or college can only occur when all relationships of power and authority are based on equal participation and consent. (p. 52)

Since, as Capel points out, “contradictory forces prevail in our society” (p. 53), the struggle to create a utopian community or college within that society is fraught with tensions, struggles, and contradictions, some of which she describes. In the histories of these experiments, there is much to learn.

The colleges that Capel describes share the following identifying characteristics, reflecting Dewey's vision of a progressive education for a more equal and democratic society:

These utopian colleges usually have no grades; work is evaluated in written reports. Classes are small and conducted in a seminar style. The students, faculty, and administration strive to be open-minded, while the colleges have a history of being non-sexist and non-racist. The idea of community is fostered, and the organizational structure emphasizes equality and sharing in a non-hierarchical manner. The entire student body tends to be more idealistic than in traditional schools. Personal growth is encouraged in an interdisciplinary educational setting not based on competition and on individual accomplishment. (p. 2)

Capel, who had direct experience at all of these colleges as a student, faculty member, or nearby resident, found in her research that, while all of them at times ran into inevitable problems in putting their ideals into practice, they all succeeded to varying degrees in providing an egalitarian community of learners and teachers, a supportive environment for women and women's ways of knowing, a “protected space” where people could both voice their personal ideas and visions, and interact constructively with the community.

Arguing that the terms “experimental, innovative, and alternative” can have too many meanings, Capel uses the term “utopian” to describe these colleges because “we all search for a utopia, a better place, and this is true also in education” (p. 3). Recognizing in the creation of these colleges the same impulse toward “a good place” and “an ideal state of perfection” that inspires the imaginary utopias of literature as well as the real-life communities, Capel compares these colleges to these other utopias. In her comparison she uses the term utopia not to mean “no place” but rather to denote a visionary alternative, which, though never fully attainable, can serve as an inspiration.

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Capel explores the histories of these institutions against the backdrop of American culture in general and in particular American higher education, the tides of reform. In her chapters titled “A Brief Overview of American Higher Education, Robber Barons, and the Progressive Movement” and “Generational, Feminist, and Cultural Cycles in Relation to Utopian Colleges,” she describes how these colleges were created and thrived during periods of political and feminist reform and have tended to struggle during the more conservative periods. Antioch College (whose first president was the educational reformer Horace Mann) and the original Goddard seminary (out of which the college developed), for instance, grew out of the reform efforts of the 1830s and 1840s, and were renewed during the progressive era of the early twentieth century, when Sarah Lawrence was also founded. The Union Institute (which offers non-residential self-designed programs for adult learners) and World College West (whose programs emphasized environmental and global understanding) were created during the turbulent 1960s and early 70s, which were also peak years for these other schools. Having survived the conservative period of the 1980s (with the exception of World College West), all have experienced renewed phases of growth and development during the 90s, while also perhaps tempering their utopian idealism in response to the current fiscal realities of the globalized economy and the corporatization of more and more aspects of our lives. In her discussion of the generational patterns in social movements and institutions, Capel speculates that the cost of survival for these colleges may be a loss of some of the fervor and purity of their original vision. How much of their unique spirit and alternative ways of teaching, learning, and governing will survive in the face of those compromises remains to be seen.

Capel also compares and contrasts these utopian colleges to other utopias in theory and practice, from Plato and Thomas More to the Shakers and transcendentalists of the 1840s, the Chautauqua community of the 1870s (which offered opportunities for self-directed adult learning later echoed in Goddard’s and Union’s programs for adult learners), to the communes and collectives of the 1960s and 70s and latter-day feminists and ecologists. In chapters titled “Studies in Utopia” and “American Utopian Communities” Capel identifies themes and issues in the various utopias and uses them as lenses through which to view these colleges. In some cases, she is disappointed in what she finds, noting that

Most [of the literary utopias] were written and presented in the western male tradition and were based upon hierarchical structures. My study of American utopian communities also often revealed similar

patriarchal living patterns. My concept of a utopian college was not a hierarchical or patriarchal manifestation, but one that went beyond those traditional systems to a more “ideal” form. (p. 3)

Her study of the colleges, in fact, revealed that, while they did not always reach that ideal form, “they seemed to be more successful when they functioned on a feminist model of community and sharing and became dysfunctional when they assumed a more hierarchical model” (p. 5).

In her final chapter, Capel synthesizes some of the insights and observations noted above, concluding that while

there can be no heaven on earth . . . utopian plans and hopes are necessary with their attempts to try to achieve better places rather than supporting the negative forces which encourage violence, racism, environmental destruction, and sexism. . . . What was reassuring and hopeful in the investigation . . . was how many of their stated ideals and much of their utopian thinking was achieved in their educational models . . . Critics of our higher education today should look to the working models of a “utopian education” in our midst for some examples to help solve some of their educational problems (p. 139–141).

In her account of the history of these experimental colleges and in her analysis of their utopian ideals and practices, Capel provides a valuable resource for those interested in higher education reform. It is also a useful resource for those interested in utopian studies and in a better understanding of the interplay between the dominant American culture and its counter-culture.

In covering so much territory however, from the general history and culture background, to the literary history, to the history of each college, Capel falls short of providing an in-depth and fully-realized analysis. While she hints, for instance, at some of the common factors in the utopian communities and colleges leading to tension and imperfection, many of her conclusions are speculative and not well-supported by the data she provides. And, in searching for commonalities among the colleges, she obscures many of their important distinctions, some of which could no doubt be traced to the eras in which their founding ideals were articulated. Some of the colleges, for instance, have been interested in being not only a refuge from the dominant society, but also in helping students learn to change that society in constructive ways. Other colleges have defined their role as providers of more individual learning and opportunities for personal development. This issue of utopia as refuge from the world or a model and change agent is important in the history of utopianism. It is also an important question to explore in thinking about how these colleges can impact higher education. But it is

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possible to explore only so many topics in one study, and Capel's book raises more questions than it answers.

One thing that this book does make clear is the value of utopian visions and experiments in helping us imagine alternatives to the status quo; we need to make sure that those tributaries keep flowing.

STEVEN A. SCHAPIRO

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Erratum

In Vol. 67, Nos. 3&4 (Summer/Fall, 1999), page 126, the review of *Thomas Chittenden: Vermont's First Statesman*, states that Vermont "entered the union as the thirteenth state." Vermont entered the Union as the fourteenth state.